

Evolution of Circumstellar Disks

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Most young solar type stars are surrounded by circumstellar accretion disks. These disks provide the raw materials for the formation of planetary systems, and indeed, the increasing number of Jupiter-mass objects found orbiting older stars suggests that planet formation is a common outcome of the star formation process. One key to understanding planet formation is establishing the lifetime of the dust and gas in circumstellar accretion disks. In this talk, I review the current observational constraints on disk lifetimes, and discuss how Spitzer, Herschel, and future far-infrared interferometric missions will dramatically improve our understanding on how disks evolve around solar-type stars.